

## Cornell Ag & Food Tech Park in Geneva Gets Land Transfer

[Cornell Ag & Food Technology Park web site](#)

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By Linda McCandless

GENEVA, NY: A research park that will promote high-tech and biotechnology jobs in the Finger Lakes is just bricks and macadam short of reality now that the governor of New York has put his "George E. Pataki" on the dotted line. On Friday, Nov. 16, Pataki signed legislation that authorizes the state to transfer and convey 70 acres of land owned by the State University of New York to Cornell in exchange for other nearby properties. The land will be used to build the Cornell Agriculture and Food Technology Park and is adjacent to the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY. As many as 150 full-time employees could be added within three years of the park's completion.

"The creation of this new Agriculture and Food Technology Park is great news for the Finger Lakes and marks another step in our ongoing effort to promote high-tech and biotech job opportunities," said Governor Pataki. "As the national



Aerial view of the main campus of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station at Geneva, and the adjacent 74 acres earmarked for the Cornell Ag & Food Tech Park.

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economic downturn continues to present major challenges, bold initiatives like the creation of this new park will help ensure that New York remains highly competitive in the battle for the high-paying jobs of the future."

"The Ag Tech Park's mission is to foster the expansion of agriculture, food science, and biotechnology research while also promoting economic growth," said James E. Hunter, president of the corporation, and director of the Experiment Station. "The park will enable start-up and established companies to carry out cutting-edge research, and will complement the existing research and extension program of the Agricultural Experiment Station."

The last major hurdle for the facility was cleared in August, when the Assembly approved the project after three years of negotiations. The NY State Senate Governor Pataki had previously announced their support for the park. The legislation takes effect immediately.

Senator Michael Nozzolio (R-53rd), who has been instrumental in acquiring support for the park, said, "This is a tremendous victory, a victory we have been fighting to achieve for the past few years. Now the ag tech park is not just a vision, but a reality."

### **Additional Federal Funding Secured**

In mid-November, Rep. Thomas M. Reynolds (R-27th) announced that the park received \$250,000 in federal funding to be used for infrastructure development, design and construction. The federal money is in addition to \$645,000 that Reynolds secured for the park last year. Reynolds called the proposed Ag-Tech Park an "important, job-creating project."

The park has been in the planning stages since 1995 and has generated broad community involvement among a number of players, including Cornell, NYSEG, Senator Nozzolio, and the industrial development agencies of both the City of



Concept drawing of the proposed Cornell Ag & Food Tech Park in Geneva, NY.

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Geneva and Ontario County. The Geneva Area Chamber of Commerce and Geneva Growth, Inc. have also been early supporters.

The park board is in the process of hiring Saratoga Associates of Saratoga Springs, NY, to provide general oversight of the project including engineering, design and management. The first phase of the project is estimated to cost about \$4.7 million and will include related water, sewer, roads, and an incubator research building. Later, a multi-tenant research building and greenhouse will be constructed at a cost of about \$3.9 million. Funding will come largely from the state and federal governments.

The Experiment Station is a premier research institution engaged in advancing sustainable plant agriculture and food systems. Established in 1882, its annual budget is \$20 million. Employees number 300.

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